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SUBJECT: CANADA BOLSTERS ASSISTANCE TO KANDAHAR

¶1. (U) Summary: On August 25, Canada announced that it will substantially boost its development commitment to Kandahar province by providing C\$45 million in support of five projects targeting health and community development. The new projects build on major funding announced in February by Prime Minister Harper to accelerate the reconstruction and development process. The funding will be allocated to the World Health Organization, the National Solidarity Program, the Kandahar Local Initiatives Program, UNICEF, and local NGOs and institutions in Kandahar. End summary.

¶2. (U) International Development Minister Bev Oda made the announcement while taking part in Afghan Independence Day celebrations in Toronto. She said that "Canada's government is proud to stand beside the Afghan people as they strive to build better lives for themselves and secure a better future for their children. Today's contribution will build on previous successes by supporting projects aiming to enhance health services and community development in Kandahar, one of the provinces in greatest need of our assistance."

¶3. (U) Canada's strategy in Kandahar province focuses on responding to basic human needs, strengthening livelihoods, and increasing the capacity of local governments. The funding will be allocated as follows:

a) C\$17.5 million to the World Health Organization (WHO) to help implement a national polio eradication initiative and a tuberculosis control program;

b) C\$10 million to the National Solidarity Program to build on the substantial results achieved to date in the areas of local governance and community development;

c) C\$5 million to the Kandahar Local Initiatives Program, which will support small-scale, quick action development and reconstruction initiatives that respond to immediate needs;

d) C\$10 million to UNICEF to help improve access to maternal and child health services in the southern region of the province, with a focus on Mirwais hospital in Kandahar City; and

e) C\$2.5 million for a rapid-response health intervention fund for local NGOs and institutions in Kandahar.

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